United Nations A/53/7/Add.11

General Assembly

Distr.: General
14 May 1999

Original: English

Fifty-third session
Agenda item 113
Programme budget for the biennium 1998–1999

United Nations Fund for International Partnerships

Twelfth report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions

1. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions has considered the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Fund for International Partnerships (UNFIP) (A/53/700 and Add.1) submitted pursuant to General Assembly decision 52/466 of 31 March 1998. During its consideration of the report, the Committee met with representatives of the Secretary-General, who provided additional information.

2. The Committee recalls that the United Nations Fund for International Partnerships (UNFIP) was created following the announcement by Robert Edward Turner, on 18 September 1998, of a gift valued at $1 billion in support of United Nations causes. The details regarding the establishment of the Fund along with the observations and recommendations of the Advisory Committee throughout the process are described in full in the report of the Secretary-General (A/53/700, paras. 3–12). The agreement that was signed on 12 June 1998 between the United Nations and the United Nations Foundation, Inc. (UNF) is contained in annex I to the report of the Secretary-General.

3. The functions and composition of the Advisory Board which assists the Secretary-General in his review of proposals to the Foundation, are set out in the report of the Secretary-General (A/53/700, paras. 14–18). The Committee notes that the Advisory Board of the Fund has held four meetings from 27 April 1998 to date.

4. The Committee further notes, from the information provided in the report of the Secretary-General, that three funding rounds have been completed to date: May 1998, September 1998, and February 1999 (A/53/700, paras. 17–23 and Add.1, paras. 1 and 2). Out of over 520 proposals received and analysed by the Fund's secretariat, the Secretary-General and his Advisory Board have recommended 95 projects, and the United Nations Foundation, Inc. has approved a total of 64 projects for funding.

5. The Committee notes that the methods of work have improved consistently during the first year of operation. The Committee further notes that not only has the process of solicitation, review and selection of project proposals been reviewed to promote a greater degree of strategic and programmatic focus, but that ways to measure the achievements and impact derived from the contribution have also been addressed. As indicated in the report of the Secretary-General, Programme Framework Groups have been established to provide guidance for the preparation of specific projects, with the participation from United Nations entities, external entities, UNFIP, the United Nations Foundation (UNF) and the World Bank (A/53/700/Add.1, para. 4). The Committee trusts that the guidelines for preparing projects will be widely distributed with a view to facilitating the presentation and adoption process.

99-14303 (E) 180599

6. The goal of the revised programmatic approach, as indicated in the Secretary-General's report (A/53/700/Add.1, para. 3), is to provide better definition and focus within the broad areas of concentration identified by UNF, while promoting greater inter-agency consultation in the definition of opportunities to be pursued by the United Nations system with UNF funding. Two Programme Framework Groups commenced their work in mid-February 1999 (population and women and children's health) and another group on environment will start work later on in the year.

7. The Committee notes that paragraph 16 of the agreement between the United Nations and the United Nations Foundation, Inc. provides for the reimbursement of administrative costs for the administration of UNFIP at a rate not to exceed 1 per cent of the amounts channelled through UNFIP by the Foundation. The Foundation provides an advance against the Fund's administrative costs at the beginning of each calendar year and another advance at the beginning of the second half of the year.

8. In addition, however, the Committee also notes that a figure of 6 per cent was agreed upon by the implementing partners and UNFIP for project support costs pursuant to paragraph 16 of the above-mentioned agreement. Of this amount, 5 per cent corresponds to the support costs of the implementing partners and 1 per cent corresponds to project support costs of UNFIP's programme development facility.

9. The Committee requested the breakdown of the annual indicative planning figure of $100 million to be programmed along the lines discussed in paragraphs 5 and 6 above and was provided with the following information:

(Millions of dollars)[a]

Women and population	30.0
Children's health	30.0
Environment	20.0
Fourth basket (humanitarian, institutional support, etc.) and Better World Fund[b]	14.4
UNFIP administrative and programme development facility	1.6
United Nations Foundation	4.0
Total	**100.0**

[a] All funds approved by the Board of Directors of UNF for projects and activities under women and population, children's health, environment and the "fourth basket" (except those channelled through the Better World Fund) are channelled through UNFIP by UNF. Additional funds, in the form of matching grants for project and activities under the aforementioned themes, are also channelled through UNFIP by UNF. These matching grants are over and above the yearly $100 million indicated above.

[b] The Better World Fund undertakes funding of projects and activities concentrated in the United States of America, that support or are supportive of the United Nations. These do not go through UNFIP.

10. The Committee further notes that the staffing establishment of UNFIP is headed by an Executive Director who reports to the Secretary-General, in addition to one Director-level official, 3 P-5s, 2 P-4s, one Junior Professional Officer and five General Service staff. However, the Advisory Committee has indicated its intention to review the Assistant Secretary-General-level post of the Executive Director after 31 December 1999, in the context of the examination of the administrative budget of the Trust Fund for the year 2000. The Committee notes that the post is vacant at present.

11. The Committee recommends that the General Assembly take note of the report of the Secretary-General (A/53/700 and Add.1). The Committee will provide additional comments in the context of its consideration of the programme budget for the biennium 2000–2001.